

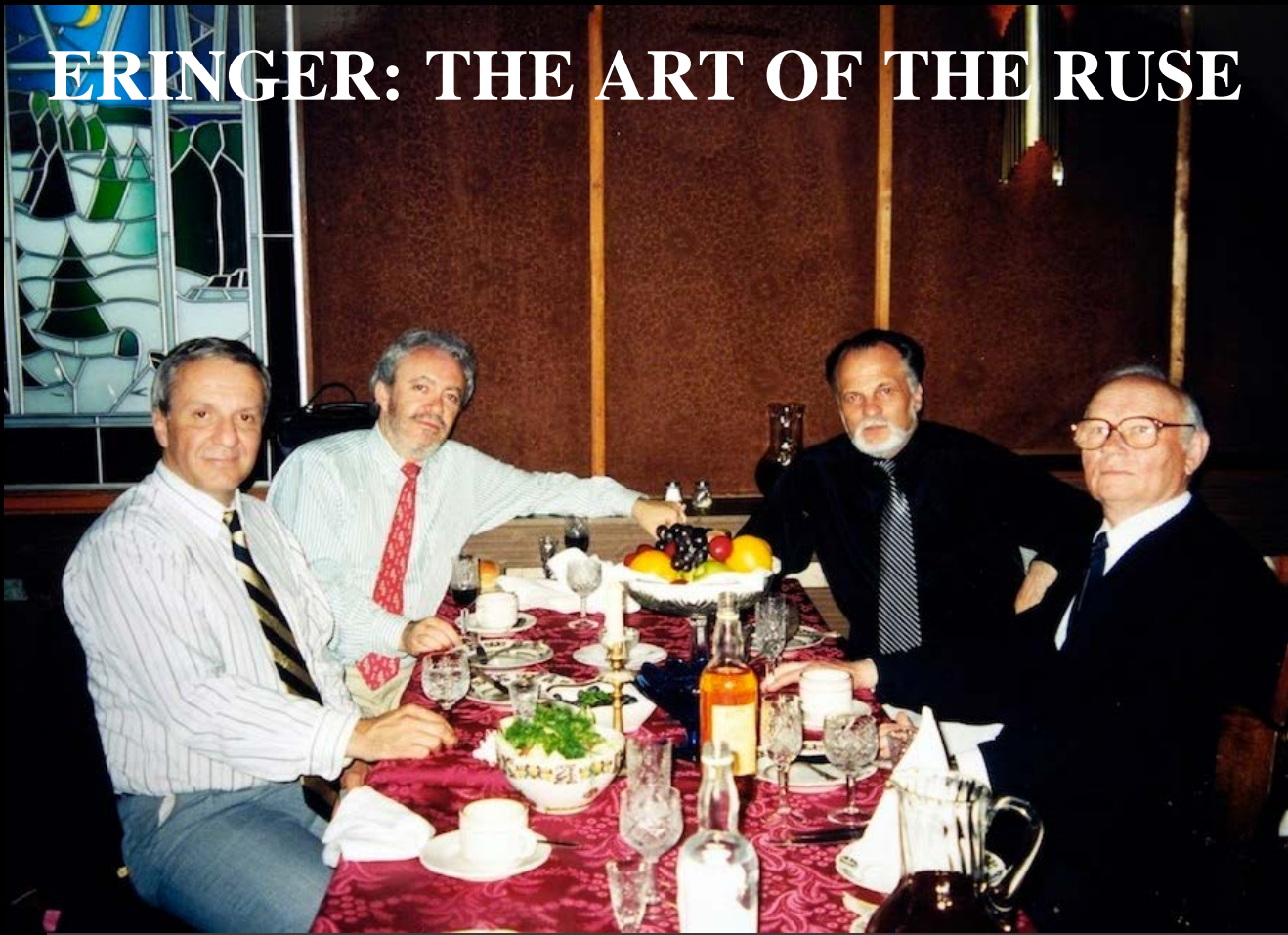


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# ERINGER: THE ART OF THE RUSE



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Friday, September 12, 2014

## 47. THE BEDMATES



Undercover with FBI Counterintelligence

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47. THE BEDMATES

Early 2000

FBI Special Agent John H would have seized upon Edward Lee Howard's plan to steal into the USA for a surreptitious visit to his native New Mexico, the one state that had a warrant on file for his arrest.

But John H was gone. And no one at Washington Field Office (WFO) nor Headquarters wanted to do anything more about Howard than pile paper, the bureaucrat's favorite pastime.

In fact, FBI Albuquerque had so little interest left in Howard, they breached protocol and transferred administration of me to WFO, which had a greater stake in my other operations.

Enter Mike S, a well-meaning, hard-working Special Agent charged with processing the product of my various sting operations.

Mike S summed up the current thinking in WFO about Edward Howard when we met on January 8th at Chef Geoff's, a restaurant on New Mexico Avenue in the leafy, affluent northwest Washington neighborhood of Wesley Heights:

"Nobody's going to get into trouble for not doing anything on this, but somebody might [get into trouble]] if they do something and it goes wrong."



Caruso: Didn't want his man

He was simply conveying the bureaucratic sentiments of his Big Cheezer, James "Tim" Caruso, National Security chief at WFO.

To me it stank like over-ripe Camembert.

"I thought the FBI always gets its man?" I said.

Mike S shrugged.

*Guess not.*

"The Bureau should catch Ed Howard," I said. "It sets the right example for any future would-be traitors: It may take us fifteen years, but we never forget you and we'll nail your ass. So what if some U.S. Attorney can't win in court? That's their problem, which they're trying to shirk. The Bureau's job is to catch Howard, throw him in the clink. If he walks later, like O.J., at least we did our part."

If WFO smelled cheesy, retired KGB Colonel Igor Prelin reeked even worse, and that was just by e-mail.



45. CLOAK & CORKSCREW



41. HANGING IN HAVANA 4



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43. CUBAN COVERSION 2



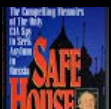
2. DEATH IN MOSCOW: 2



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## Labels

- Cubans
- Edward Lee Howard
- Snowden
- Vladimir Kryuchkov

## About Me



ROBERT ERINGER

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## Blog Archive

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Prelin had harnessed a new book, and he asked me to meet him in London, to which he would travel with the book's author, a former KGB colleague named Stalian "Alexey" Sokolov.

The FBI said, Sure, why not?

By this time, I managed a cluster of ever-evolving operations without geographic restraint, with enough clout to set my own agenda.

And so off again, to London, just two months after my rendezvous in Switzerland with Edward Howard.

Prelin and his friend Sokolov awaited me in the small lobby of the old Coburg Hotel on Bayswater Road. I'd made dinner reservations around the corner at Royal China.

We sat, studied menus, each other; ordered hot sake.

I congratulated Prelin on his foresight: He had predicted a Putin presidency two years before anyone could have known.

"Yes." Prelin chuckled, brushing modesty aside. "I get your message from Edward. You remember our conversation. I say it will be name nobody knows. We at KGB engineer Putin to power."

"How?" I asked.

"Finally, deal with Yeltsin," said Prelin. "Yeltsin receives immunity from corruption. But after he dies, we go after all Yeltsin relatives."

(A Russian tradition.)

Said Prelin: "Putin's power-base is from GRU and FSB. He will increase intelligence presence around him from 40 to 80 percent."

I asked about my old Uncle Vlad.

Said Prelin: The former KGB chairman had been in hospital for knee surgery. He had become an unofficial advisor to Putin, counseling the new Russian president to take strict control of government and build a strong Russia.

Alexey Sokolov nodded. Sokolov had a saggy horse's face and a perpetual expression of gloom.

At 69, eight years older than Prelin, this was Sokolov's first visit to London.

Hot sake arrived. I poured, we toasted. Soon after, three bowls of Wonton soup appeared before us, followed by prawns with honey and black bean sauce, scallops with asparagus, stir-fried Dover sole, and two bowls of steamed rice.

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47. THE BEDMATES

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Following my example, both KGB veterans attempted to use chopsticks. They fumbled their food and turned our table into a war zone. When they finally gave up, the two Russians did not request cutlery, but switched to soup ladles.

(The competence to use multi-cultural eating utensils should be a prerequisite for spy work.)

In between swallows, Prelin raised the reason for their trip: Sokolov's book.

They pitched it as a nonfiction expose of Oleg Kalugin, the former KGB First Directorate chief who had settled in the USA but never actually defected.

"Cool," I said. "What's the story on Kalugin? Why won't he return to Moscow?"

"If he comes back to Moscow," said Prelin, "he will be executed within 24 hours."

Sokolov looked quizzically at his buddy. "But we no longer have death penalty, Igor."

"No matter." Prelin was vehement. "Execution within 24 hours."



Kalugin: Targeted

"So you'd like to kill Kalugin?" I said.

"Of course." Prelin was matter-of-fact on this point.

"Do you know where he lives?" I asked.

"Washington," said Prelin. "He lives with two daughters."

"Would you ever try to kill him in the United States?" I asked.

Prelin shrugged. "Who knows?"

Back to Sokolov's book, already written in Russian and published in Russia. Its theme: Kalugin was personally responsible for every Russian spy case that ever went south on the KGB, over a 40-year period, including Aldrich Ames.

"Oh, c'mon," I said.

"I tell you," Prelin whined. "Kalugin gives Ames up. We know this."

Sokolov nodded. This KGB veteran had done one four-year stint in



Washington, in the late 1960s, and spent the rest of his career at headquarters in Moscow analyzing the U.S. intelligence services. He did not tell me (I already knew) why he never served overseas again:

Sokolov's superiors discovered him to be a closet homosexual and they did not wish to avail him to honey-trap blackmail scenarios.

Sokolov told me that he personally recruited John Walker, the NSA spy; that the English-language version of his book would detail this case.

"I once recruited American couple working for the State Department in one elevator ride," Sokolov boasted. "Twelve floors. By the time we reach bottom, one minute, I recruit."

As for the mechanics regarding Sokolov's book, Prelin offered George Blake's services as a translator.

"Ah, we have MI5 behind us," said Prelin, looking over his shoulder. "I know them!"

Sokolov, facing me (I, seated next to Prelin), craned his neck. "Where, Igor, where you see?"

(This was like a *Bullwinkle* cartoon with a gay version of Boris and Natasha.)

I didn't even turn around.

"I am kidding!" Prelin said with glee.

I settled the check. Prelin requested that we walk to their hotel, about fifteen minutes away; they had some gifts for me.

As we walked Bayswater Road, Prelin occasionally slipped his elbow through mine. Soon we arrived at the Lancaster Court Hotel. Prelin suggested we go up to the room they shared "to drink vodka."

I declined, suggesting I wait in the small lobby while they grabbed their gifts and we take the party to my hotel, The Lowndes, which has a cozy lounge and a decent bar.

Fifteen minutes later, a taxi deposited us on Lowndes Street. Inside, Prelin ordered a cocktail of his own creation: gin, Campari and tonic. He instructed Sokolov to drink the same.

I opted for armagnac and went to my room to find a Cuban cigar. On my return, Sokolov reached into his plastic bag (from a duty free shop at Sheremtevo Airport) and handed me my gifts:

\* A copy of his Russian book, *Spy Story*, in which he had scribed: "To Robert Eringer, Who are going to know more about spies than I do, with the best regard of the author..." signed and dated.

- \* A bottle of KCTOK vodka (best for cleaning ovens).

- \* A jar of caviar.

"Gee, thanks, Alexey."

I snipped the tip of a Monte Cristo No. 5, lit, puffed, and consulted my armagnac. That's when Prelin offered me two million dollars for the CIA's file on Aldrich Ames.

"How could I possibly get the Ames file?" I laughed.

Prelin shrugged. "Any way you can. If you get, two million dollars."

I asked Prelin if he was still chief of the retired KGB officers association.

He whipped out a red faux leather, gold-embossed card. "This is my membership."

I studied Prelin's photograph (twenty years younger). "Nice."

"You want?" asked Prelin.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I make you honorary member of FIVA, retired KGB association. For services to the Motherland."

"Really?"

"You will receive card exactly like card carried by Edward [Howard] and George [Blake]," said Prelin. "And you get nice badge, too," added Sokolov. "Five stars."

"Is that how many years of prison I'd get if the FBI finds out?" I said.

"No more than twenty years," cracked Prelin.

Sokolov suggested that I share with him the byline of his Kalugin book.

"But you've already written it," I said. "You've done all the work."

Prelin jumped in. "It would be better for the book to have an American author, no?"

*No, you piece of pig-poop. No Western author is going to give your crap-book credibility on my watch.*

I said I'd think about it.

Next day, I hosted a lunch for Prelin, Sokolov and Nicholas Davies, a British nonfiction book author. All I'd told Davies, whom I'd known since he was foreign editor of the UK *Daily Mirror* years earlier, was that I was

developing book projects with this pair of Russians.



We met at The Lowndes and walked to Zaffarano, a high-class Italian restaurant two doors away.

Prelin deliberately sat with his back to the wall.

"Ah, this is good," he exulted. "I can see the door!"

"Tell me if anyone from MI5 comes in," I deadpanned, but my sarcasm was lost on him.

We got off to a faltering start. Davies spoke too fast for the Russians, though they pretended to understand what clearly they did not. It was clear we needed lubrication. I ordered a bottle of pinot grigio.

Conversation centered on Davies. The Russians had done their homework and knew he'd written a slew of books on British royalty, primarily about Princess Diana.

Sokolov, sitting across from me, said little. He steadied his eyes in my direction. A propos of nothing, he said, "It is true you join Ku Klux Klan?"

"Yep," I replied. "I still have my robe and hood. Of course," I added, "I did it to expose them in a British newspaper."

Another question from Sokolov: "What is meaning *dream bed*?"

Apparently, Sokolov had thought the term *dream bed* meant twin beds. Consequently, he and Prelin doubled as bedmates in a standard-size double bed.

Such imagery was most unappetizing. And then our meal arrived.

Digging into salmon over a bed of spinach, Prelin reported with glee that during his career he had never worked with a female KGB agent. He said women were no good to work with.

Sokolov nodded agreement.

(If I had to double up in a cheap hotel and share a *dream bed*, I would certainly prefer working with a female agent.)

Davies departed. My two Russian guests and I reassembled in The Lowndes lounge so I could coach Sokolov on what to write as an addendum to his book for American readers:

\* Ames. You must address Ames.

\* Analysis. If, as you say, your job was to analyze U.S. intelligence services, what were your assessments?

\* SVR and FSB. No one, I pointed out, had yet written a book on Russian intelligence since the disintegration of the KGB.

\* Putin. A strong chapter on how the intelligence apparatus engineered the ascension of Putin to the presidency.

Sokolov agreed. Prelin concurred.

All that remained was payment for George Blake to translate. They promised to check with Blake and let me know the cost.

"And I will send you KGB card," said Prelin.

Six weeks later a large envelope arrived by Fed Ex. It had been opened and resealed with U.S. Customs tape.

Inside, my red faux leather, gold-embossed KGB card, membership number 4038. And a five-star badge.



It was official: I'd been made by the KGB.

Posted by **ROBERT ERINGER** at 7:23 AM



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# 1 comment:



**vworking@blogger.com** September 12, 2014 at 12:53 PM

It would be incredibly naive and not at all intelligent to imagine that the status quo will not always be under relatively anonymous and undefeatable sustained autonomous attack and stealthy non-attributable assault by smarter virtual forces which do not accept the perverse and self-serving inequities and corrupt sub-prime shenanigans of current failed and failing currency SCADA systems administrations ..... Ye Olde Worlde New World Order and Project for the New America Century type players ..... REBUILDING AMERICA'S DEFENSES .... Strategy, Forces and Resources For a New Century ..... and that Scottish Nationalist aspirations would be in any way dimmed by anything which does not deliver freedom from shackles despised and realised as figments of imagination virtualised into existence and wielded for the pleasure of a select foreign and alien few rather than for the enjoyment of the many.

To think that one can now put that gene/meme genie back in the bottle is to prove to one and all that one not thinking at all clearly and certainly nowhere near deep or far enough into the mind and minds of that and/or those which deliver the future and zeroday's dail

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